

Appl. No. : 09/976,665
Filed : October 10, 2001

REMARKS

Claims 4 and 11 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 15 and 16 have been added. Support for Claim 15 can be found throughout the specification and Figs. 1 and 5. Support for Claim 16 can be found on page 7, lines 23-27, for example. Accordingly, Claims 15 and 16 are pending in this application. The amendments do not constitute the addition of any new matter to the specification. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments and reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

Rejection of Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 4 and 11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kim (WO 00/44990 and U.S. Patent 6,637,973, respectively). As mentioned above, Claims 4 and 11 have been canceled. Thus, this rejection is moot.

New Claims 15 and 16

New Claim 15 recites: a method of making a left turn in a waiting vehicle at an intersection where vehicles travel on the right side of a road, wherein a first oncoming vehicle is entering the intersection and wherein a second oncoming vehicle following the first oncoming vehicle has its left-turn signal on, said method comprising: sensing blinking signals of the left-turn signal of the second oncoming vehicle from a first end of an optical fiber installed linearly along the centerline of the road, said first end being directed facing a driver of the waiting vehicle, wherein the blinking signals are reflected to said first end from a second end of the optical fiber, wherein the optical fiber is longer than the length of the first oncoming vehicle such that said second end is directed to receive the blinking signals of the left-turn signal of the second oncoming vehicle and reflect the light to the first end and the waiting vehicle; and the waiting vehicle turning left when the driver deems conditions to be safe taking into consideration the presence of the blinking signals sensed.

In the present invention, it is significant that (i) a first end of an optical fiber is directed facing a driver of the waiting vehicle, (ii) the light is reflected to the first end and the waiting vehicle, and (iii) whereby a driver of the waiting vehicle can make a left turn safely.

In contrast, in Kim, there is neither configuration nor suggestion of the above significant features (i), (ii) and (iii). As discussed in the telephone interview conducted on July 1, 2004, in

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Kim, as is apparent from Figs. 8 and 9, light is received from a vehicle and reflected in front of the vehicle (thereby effectively securing the driver's visible distance in driving to improve the driver's safety), whereas in the present invention, light is received from a second oncoming vehicle following a first oncoming vehicle and reflected to a driver of a waiting vehicle at an intersection (thereby supporting the driver of the waiting vehicle to safely make a left turn at an intersection). Further, Fig 13 of Kim suggests neither the existence of a second oncoming vehicle behind a first oncoming vehicle nor making a left turn at an intersection. In contrast, in the present invention, it is also significant to sense blinking signals of the left-turn signal of a second oncoming vehicle (not a first oncoming vehicle) from a first end of an optical fiber.

In view of the foregoing, Claim 15 could not be obvious over Kim. Claim 16 dependent on Claim 15, at least for the reason above, could not be obvious over Kim. It is respectfully submitted that Claims 15 and 16 should be allowable.

CONCLUSION

In light of the Applicant's foregoing Remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining concerns which might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: July 7, 2004

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